



A NEW DYNAMIC FOR
AUTISM

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Autism-Europe Manifesto for the European Elections 2019

Ahead of the European Parliament elections that will take place between 23rd and 26th May 2019, Autism-Europe **calls on future Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to express their support to advance the rights of autistic people throughout Europe** in the next legislative term 2019-2024.

It is estimated that **5 million people are on the autism spectrum in the European Union**. Most of them experience widespread discrimination in many fields of their lives as well as social exclusion.

In order to respond to the daily challenges autistic people face, we call on future MEPs, but also other relevant stakeholders – such as the European Commission, the European Council and Member States:

- **To promote the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) through an ambitious EU Disability Strategy post-2020 leaving no one behind**

[Autism-Europe](#) very much welcomes that the year 2018 finally saw the ratification of the UNCRPD by all 28 Member States of the European Union. However, ratification is definitely not a means to an end.

The **full implementation of the UNCRPD** requires that **all groups of persons with disabilities are duly taken into consideration**. This is especially important because autism is sometimes described as an invisible disability compared to others, which means that the **specific needs of autistic people in terms of accessibility and support** tend to be forgotten.

The new **EU Disability Strategy post-2020** should address the **diversity of disabled people** to allow all of them to fully enjoy their rights.

To achieve this objective, it is key that the next strategy is underpinned by **adequate funding** through the future **Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027** (MFF) and that a range of disabled people organisations (DPOs) representing diverse groups are financially supported to monitor and inform the process at the EU-level.

Disability should also be mainstreamed in all policies areas, in particular the **implementation of the EU Pillar of Social Rights and its related initiatives**. Alongside the European Disability Forum (EDF) and other disability networks, we call for a social protection floor for disabled people, the promotion of employment and inclusive workplaces, full access to education with individualised support and access to adequate services to support life in the community.

- **To take action regarding the 2015 European Parliament Written Declaration on Autism calling for a European strategy**

Given that autistic people face similar challenges in many aspects of their lives across the EU, the latter can play an important role in supporting the **exchange of best practices, fostering cooperation, and streamlining efforts**. A European approach should also **provide support** for autistic people and their families **to exercise their right of free movement** more easily.

Autism is a lifelong disability and the full life-cycle should be considered. Supporting autistic people and their families and **fostering real improvements in well-being** requires more than just stand-alone policies.

It calls for a **holistic approach** in different policy areas, which work together to support the autistic community in all aspects of their lives, from access to diagnosis, to education, employment, housing and support for life in the community, etc.

We call on MEPs and other relevant stakeholders at the EU and national level:

1. To encourage EU Member States to adopt **cross-sectoral national strategies or action plans** to respond to the needs and foster inclusion of autistic people, in line with the UNCRPD and international recommendations
2. To promote the **coordination between Member States** of all relevant policies in support of autistic people and their families
3. To improve the **quality of community support services for inclusion across Europe** and end segregation, notably through the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds, in line with the UNCRPD
4. To **adopt principles of best practices and foster exchange of knowledge** between Member States in relation to providing the best support for people on the autism spectrum

5. To promote **adequate training of professionals across sectors** to develop understanding and effective support for autism
6. To **support research and networks of experts** with the aim to improve quality of life of autistic people across the EU
7. To **combat stigma and prejudices** against autistic people, notably through awareness-raising campaigns
8. To support the **driving role and the involvement of autistic people and their families** through representative autism organisations throughout these processes

Now, make a pledge for autism and commit to:

- **support autistic people of all ages and needs**, and their families, in their parliamentary work;
- support measures for the **full inclusion of autistic people in society**, and the full respect of their rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- support the **removal of barriers preventing autistic people from partaking in education, employment and other areas of life** that can foster greater autonomy;
- **support investment in EU initiatives that favour the social inclusion** of autistic people and support for their unique needs;
- support the promotion of **diagnosis and early, science-based interventions** for autistic children;
- be open to **discussing issues important to the autism community** with representative autism organisations.



[Download the pledge](#), sign it, and send it to communication@autismeurope.org



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